



## **News Release**

**For Immediate Release:**

Thursday, July 6, 2006

**Media Contact:**

Nan Streeter

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

(801) 231-8246

### **Utah Department of Health Working to Resolve Customer Service Concerns Impacting WIC Participants**

**(Salt Lake City, UT)** – Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is taking action to resolve the current problems with a new software application in the Women, Infants and Children Program. Since the application launch in March, many WIC participants have been waiting longer than normal at their appointments to receive services at local clinics across the state. Some delays have required another appointment, and a few participants have chosen not to return to receive their services.

“We are deeply concerned with the impact the software problems are having on providing good customer service to participants,” said Nan Streeter, director, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, UDOH. “Making sure the application runs properly is our number-one priority and efforts are underway to fix the problems as quickly as possible.”

A new Windows software application was rolled out on March 3 to replace an aging DOS-based system that was well over 10 years old. Clinics rely on this system, supported by UDOH, to provide WIC services. The new software application has been having problems since its rollout. Recently, local WIC clinic staff members reported to UDOH that they are concerned about participants who may choose not to return for services.

Clinics in Tooele County have been impacted by the WIC software problems. Tooele County Health Department Executive Director Myron Bateman said that participants and staff are frustrated, but they know that the problems are being fixed. “Participants and staff understand that once the software is corrected, things will return to normal and we’ll have a better system. We just need to be patient,” he said.

**Page 2 of 2 - Utah Department of Health Working to Resolve Customer Service Concerns Impacting WIC Participants**

UDOH has brought in several consultants to review the system, including a consultant provided by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The consultant findings and recommendations, when completed, will be reviewed. UDOH administration is in the process of developing a plan to resolve the problems as soon as possible. Plans will be finalized as soon as the consultant reports have all been received and reviewed.

The Utah WIC Program is federally funded through the U. S. Department of Agriculture and serves approximately 67,000 women, infants and children each month. Participants in the WIC Program receive nutrition counseling and are issued food vouchers each month in 51 clinics across the state.

# # #

*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*